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Acting Director

County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

March 01, 2011

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The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Sachi A. Hamai
SACHI A. HAMAI
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Supervisors:

REQUEST FOR ACCEPTANCE OF FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS FROM HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) – (3 VOTES)

SUBJECT

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) received a federal grant from Health and Human Services to increase and improve the recruitment and retention efforts of permanent families for various target populations of children and youth in foster care and probation. DCFS is requesting that the Board accept the funds and ratify the Designated Representative's signature on the Cooperative Agreement with Health and Human Services (HHS).

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Accept \$1,820,000 in federal grant funds that are being awarded to DCFS through Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau Discretionary Grant and Cooperative Agreement Award (referred to as 'the Grant') entitled "Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System." This Grant is 100% fully funded by the Federal revenue. There will be no impact on net County cost (NCC). This is a five year grant effective October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2015.
2. Ratify the Designated Representative's signature on the Cooperative Agreement with HHS.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

On August 2, 2010, DCFS submitted a grant proposal to Health and Human Services (HHS) in response to their announcement of a federal grant opportunity for seven government agencies

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

to receive up to \$2,000,000 in grant funds over a five year period for cooperative agreements of comprehensive multi-faceted diligent recruitment programs for a range of resource families including Kinship, foster care, concurrent planning and adoptive parents. DCFS submitted a proposal entitled "Collaborative Strategies for Diligent Recruitment" and on September 23, 2010, DCFS was awarded one of the grants totaling approximately \$1,820,000. It was very important that community organizations and partners were included in the proposal. The five year grant period is from October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2015. The strategies planned and approved by HHS for these funds are included in Attachment I.

By accepting the grant funds awarded, DCFS will be able to implement the programs stated above and more families will be recruited to provide care and timely permanency to our most vulnerable youth.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended actions are consistent with the principles of the Countywide Strategic Plan Goals 4 (Fiscal Responsibility) and 5 (Children and Family Well-Being). Utilizing available Federal funding provides the County with the opportunity to enhance the likelihood for older, at-risk youth in foster care and probation to achieve permanency.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

This Grant does not require a County match and is 100% fully funded by the Federal revenue. Therefore, there will be no impact on net County cost (NCC).

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

These strategies meet the requirements of the Grant by partnering with community agencies to develop and implement diligent recruitment strategies that will increase the number of youth that reach permanency.

There is not a contract or an MOU; however when applying for the Grant, DCFS had to identify a Designated Representative that would submit the grant proposal and complete the application forms. A Children's Services Administrator I in the Adoption and Permanency Resources Division was assigned the task. Upon being notified that DCFS was being awarded the Grant, DCFS was also notified that the same Designated Representative was the only person authorized to sign the Cooperative Agreement which had to be signed and returned to HHS by the time of the kick-off meeting on December 9, 2010. Therefore, DCFS is requesting that the Board ratify the signature of the Designated Representative. By having the Designated Representative sign the Cooperative Agreement, DCFS has agreed to:

1. Implement a comprehensive multi-faceted diligent recruitment program as a means of improving permanency outcomes;
2. Integrate the diligent recruitment program with other agency programs to facilitate active concurrent planning activities;
3. Demonstrate the capacity to use this project as a transformative platform for improved system responses to permanency beginning at the entry in the child welfare system;

4. Evaluate the implementation of the comprehensive diligent recruitment programs to document processes and potential linkages between diligent recruitment and improved outcomes; and
5. Develop identifiable sites that other States/locales seeking to implement improved diligent recruitment methods can look to for guidance, insight, and possible replication.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

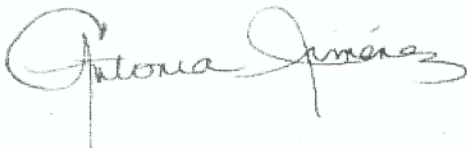
Approval of the recommended actions will allow DCFS to enhance the above mentioned services and try new creative approaches that are designed to improve the lives of children and families in all supervisorial districts by reducing the number of children in out-of-home care that exit the foster care or probation system without a permanent family or connection. It would also shorten the timelines to permanency for youth under the supervision of DCFS and Probation.

CONCLUSION

Upon approval of this request, instruct the Executive Officer/Clerk of the Board to send an adopted stamped copy of this Board letter to:

1. Department of Children and Family Services
Service Bureau 1
4060 Watson Plaza Drive
Lakewood, CA 90712
Attention: Joi Russell, Deputy Director

Respectfully submitted,



ANTONIA JIMÉNEZ
Acting Director

AJ:JR:DW:sg

Enclosures

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System

As provided by the terms of the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-224), the attached financial assistance award establishes a cooperative agreement between the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), the Children's Bureau (CB), and the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. Pursuant to P.L. 95-224, this Cooperative Agreement provides for substantial involvement and collaboration of CB in activities related to the multi-faceted diligent recruitment program designed to assist States and Counties in the recruitment and support of foster and adoptive families for children in public foster care.

The purpose of this program announcement is to fund, by awarding Cooperative Agreements, multi-faceted diligent recruitment programs for a range of resource families for children in foster care, including kinship, foster, concurrent and adoptive families. Funded Projects will:

1. Implement comprehensive multi-faceted diligent recruitment programs for resource families, including kinship, foster, concurrent, and adoptive families for children and youth served by public child welfare agencies as a means of improving permanency outcomes;
2. Integrate the diligent recruitment program with other agency programs, including foster care case planning and permanency planning processes, to facilitate active concurrent planning activities;
3. Demonstrate the capacity to use this project as a transformative platform for improved system response to permanency, incorporating in changes at the policy and practice levels and embracing a philosophy of permanency beginning at the entry in the child welfare system;
4. Evaluate the implementation of the comprehensive diligent recruitment programs to document processes and potential linkages between diligent recruitment and improved outcomes; and
5. Develop identifiable sites that other States/locales seeking to implement improved diligent recruitment methods can look to for guidance, insight, and possible replication.

Responsibilities of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

1. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will complete all activities and tasks in accordance with the workplan described in their proposal, or within 45 days of receiving the financial assistance award, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will submit to CB for review and approval any clarifications or revisions to the work plan, if necessary, to address comments raised by CB during the application review process or initial briefing. Any subsequent revisions to the work plan, if necessary, will be submitted to CB for review and approval.

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2. Within two to four months after the award of the 12-month planning phase of the Cooperative Agreement, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services Project Director must attend a one-day work planning meeting in Washington, D.C. with the Federal Project Officer (FPO) and other CB staff for consultation regarding the plans for carrying out all components of this Project and for the purpose of discussing details of the Project work plan and cooperative agreement, including the 12 month strategy development phase (Phase I) for the development of the Project. The Phase I Plan will address each of the following components as required in the Program Announcement:
 - a) Description of the characteristics of children in care utilizing information and analysis of Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data and other data available to the State, Region, or County;
 - b) Complete a projection of the types of foster, concurrent, and permanent families who may be needed, based on current case trends for different characteristics of children and youth;
 - c) Assess the current pool of available foster, concurrent, and adoptive placement resources;
 - d) Analyze barriers presented by the agency or current processes in order to increase the rate of retention of prospective foster, concurrent, or adoptive families and to reduce the dropout rates;
 - e) Explore barriers and identify possible strengths of the agency in support of the dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes;
 - f) Develop or enhance collaborations and public-private partnerships that reflect the communities from which the children in care come;
 - g) Identify or develop training for staff to engage effectively with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities who are reflective of the children and youth in foster care;
 - h) Identify or develop training to prospective foster and adoptive parents regarding the characteristics, needs, and issues of children who have experienced trauma and removal as well as adoption clinical issues;
 - i) Explore barriers and identify possible strengths of the agency in working with families, youth, and possible placement resources on active concurrent plans;
 - j) Explore barriers and identify possible strengths of the agency in utilizing a "customer service" model in collaboration with the AdoptUsKids in responding to kin as well as prospective foster or adoptive parents;
 - k) Assessment of agencies and community-based organizations who can provide services (including foster care, adoption, and family finding facilities and programs) in a family-

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1) Develop a plan to be implemented by the project in Years 2-5. This is the “Phase II – Version A” implementation plan and address anticipated logistical and administrative issues..

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- j) Training staff to engage effectively with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities who are reflective of the children and youth in foster care;
- k) Providing training to prospective foster and adoptive parents regarding the characteristics, needs, and issues of children who have experienced trauma and removal as well as adoption clinical issues;
- l) Dealing with linguistic barriers;
- m) Ensuring a non-discriminatory fee structure, including the use of purchase of service arrangements with public and private agencies (including community-based and other organizations) when necessary to facilitate and support placement;
- n) Dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes;
- o) Working with families, youth, and possible placement resources on active concurrent plans;
- p) Collaboration and coordination with CB's National Adoption Recruitment Campaign and the fulfillment activities conducted by AdoptUsKids;
- q) Timely search for prospective parents for children in care, including strategies for locating relatives (both maternal and paternal), mining existing relationships of youth, and eliminating barriers to the interjurisdictional placement of children, including the use of adoption exchanges, including www.AdoptUsKids.org and/or regional or local exchanges as well as the establishment of procedures and processes to facilitate interjurisdictional placements and payment mechanisms;
- r) Collaboration with agencies and community-based organizations that can provide services (including foster care, adoption, and family finding facilities and programs) in a family-centered model of active concurrent planning with families involved in the child welfare system and implementation of strategies to improve performance if necessary;
- s) Development of plans to address legal issues related to the effective judicial support of early and continuous family finding and relationship mining as one aspect of child specific recruitment for foster, concurrent, and adoptive homes;
- t) Development of strategies to move the program towards a philosophy of working on permanency from the first day that children enter the child welfare system, including revision of policy, procedures, and practice models that do not support that philosophy; and
- u) Training strategies for staff and community partners.

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4. One month after feedback is received from CB, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services must submit a revised Implementation Work Plan "Phase II - Version B", incorporating the recommendations of CB staff. The CB will review these plans and they must be approved by CB before they can be implemented.
5. Ten months after the award of the cooperative agreement, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services may be requested to make an oral presentation to CB staff in Washington, D.C., describing and defending their plans for the Phase II - Version A Implementation Plan. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will be advised to send three Project staff members to make the presentation, including the Project Director, the evaluator, and one other key partner.
6. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will vet all resumes for key positions on the Project with CB.
7. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will collaborate with CB by participating, at least quarterly, in consultations, meetings, briefings, teleconferences, and other forums to review current and planned activities, to share information, and to promote coordination of the grant cluster.
8. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will collaborate with CB for review and approval of all topics, times, places, speakers, invitees, and mailing/dissemination lists for conferences and major meetings.
9. At least one key staff member from the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will attend CB grantees meeting in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.
10. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services must submit all draft RFPs or contracts related to this Project to CB for review and approval prior to issuance.
11. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will provide to the CB for review and approval drafts of all updated or new materials that are developed or printed with resources made available under this Cooperative Agreement. Dissemination plans for such materials must also have prior approval from CB. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, will finalize, print, and disseminate these materials following review and approval by CB.
12. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will provide written six-month progress reports and financial status reports to the Office of Grants Management, Administration for Children and Families, with a copy to CB.
13. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will include proper disclaimer language (to be provided) on all products or materials produced, developed, and disseminated with resources made available under this cooperative agreement.

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14. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will collaborate with the CB National Adoption Recruitment Campaign as well as the fulfillment activities conducted by AdoptUsKids.
15. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will submit all performance indicator data, program, and financial reports in a timely manner, in recommended format (to be provided). CB prefers and will accept the final report on DVD/CD or electronically using a standard word-processing program.
16. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services will submit an original and two copies of the final report, the evaluation report, and any program products within 90 days of Project end date.


Responsibilities of the Children's Bureau

1. CB will provide consultation and will review and approve the work plan for the Project and any revisions made to the work plan during the budget/Project period.
2. CB will provide feedback on the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services description of its "Phase II-Version A" Implementation Plan, and must review and approve any work plan revisions thereafter.
3. CB will organize periodic consultations, meetings, briefings, teleconferences, and other forums, as necessary, with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services to review current and planned activities, to share information, and to promote coordination. The first of these meetings will occur within thirty days of the financial assistance awards so that the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services can collaborate with the CB on the plans for carrying out all components of this Project.
4. CB will review and approve drafts of all updated or new materials that are developed or printed with resources made available under this Cooperative Agreement.
5. CB will review and approve all topics, times, places, speakers, invitees, and mailing/dissemination lists for conferences and major meetings.
6. CB will review all resumes for key positions on the Project and approve key position hires.
7. CB will keep the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services informed about expectations for performance, current Bureau policy as well as the Bureau's vision for child and family services.

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8. CB will provide opportunities for, and will facilitate, coordination and collaboration with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, and to the extent necessary, the CB Training and Technical Assistance Network and other contractors or grantees funded by the CB.
9. CB will facilitate collaboration and coordination of activities of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services with CB's National Adoption Recruitment Campaign and the fulfillment activities conducted by AdoptUsKids.



Clare Anderson
Deputy Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth
and Families



Los Angeles County Department of
Children and Family Services

ATTACHMENT II

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES PLANNED AND APPROVED BY HHS

1. Increase the number of Resource Parents for deaf children. The plan is to contract with Five Acres Foster Family Agency as they have existing therapeutic services for deaf families. By adding a part-time linguistically and culturally competent recruiter and social worker to their existing services, Five Acres will be able to reach out into the deaf community to identify new families and provide them the services they need to approve and retain these families.
2. Increase the number of adoptive families and permanent adult connections for older African-American and Latino youth in the foster care and probation systems. The plan is to contract with Kidsave International, Inc. (Kidsave). They have had success in helping older youth achieve permanency with their weekend hosting program. The hosts act as 'super mentors' by not only being a positive adult connection for the youth, but by advocating in their own community for permanency. Older youth are most likely to be adopted by someone they know, so helping youth get to know more people over time increases their chances for permanency. By adding two half-time culturally competent recruiters, they can provide better outreach to the African-American and Latino faith-based and neighborhood communities.
3. Increase cultural competency of staff and partners, particularly regarding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ) youth and adults. There is a strong need to increase the ability of social workers and probation officers to work with this population and help the youth and families feel comfortable in self-identifying themselves as LGBTQ so that both the Probation Department and the Department of Children and Family Services can meet their needs. This in turn will increase the number of successful placement for LGBTQ youth and families. The plan is to contract with the Human Rights Campaign Foundation so that they can provide needed training to DCFS, Probation, and other grant partners.
4. Increase retention of Resource Parents that have been involved in concurrent planning. Despite being trained to support reunification, families that had hopes of adopting the child in their care, are devastated when the child returns home or is placed with relatives. Frequently these families are no longer willing to take another placement. DCFS has not offered support services to the Resource Parents in these situations usually because the child is no longer in their care or their focus is on reunification with the birth family. The Department loses many excellent Resource Parents because of this. The Regents of University of California - TIES for Families previously had a

grant for their LIFT support group (Loss Intervention for Families in Transition) and it was successful in supporting and retaining families involved in concurrent planning. The plan is to contract with TIES for Families so that they can provide the LIFT program to families as there is currently a list of families that are waiting for this service.

5. Increase the number of older youth placed with relatives. The Permanency Partners Program (P3) has been very successful in finding and engaging families for youth in long-term foster care. Recently, a pilot or PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) was implemented to have P3 services initiated close to the time of detention (called Upfront P3) with an emphasis on locating fathers and paternal relatives. The pilot demonstrated success in finding and engaging more relatives than in the control group. Therefore, the plan is to increase the number of Upfront P3 workers by filling three current P3 vacancies for this fiscal year and then hiring 3 part-time P3 workers that will be funded for years two through five of the Grant.
6. Engage the faith-based community in increasing the number of youth, particularly African-American, Latino, and LGBTQ older youth that reach timely permanence or at minimum, a permanent connection. DCFS has seen how impactful the faith-based community can be in helping children and youth. DCFS plans to issue an open solicitation for a qualified agency to provide two faith-based liaisons to develop and facilitate two Interfaith Recruitment Councils; one to cover the northern half of Los Angeles County and one to cover the southern half of Los Angeles County to engage faith-based organizations to actively participate on one of the Councils. The goal of the Interfaith Recruitment Councils will be to develop and implement Resource Parent recruitment programs on an on-going basis and recruit other faith-based organization to do the same.
7. Hire an experienced and competent child welfare evaluator to collect baseline data, develop evaluation tools, collect on-going data and do a full analysis of all the programs. This must be in line with all the requirements of the Grant. The evaluator will need to go to Washington DC with the DCFS managers and have regular meetings and discussions with the Federal Grant Evaluator Consultant.